

Dear Transportation Committee Members, Co-Chairs Lemar and Haskell, State Representative Concepcion, and State Senator Fonfara,

I am excited to see **SB-4, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT CLEAN AIR ACT** moving forward as critical climate action legislation in the transportation committee. I am **writing today in support of that bill**, with some small suggestions to make it even more impactful and effective.

First, I'll share that I am a current Board Member of the CT CHEAPR Board, and therefore have been thinking a lot about how the state can reduce emissions from our state's biggest emitting sector for air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while at the same time serving the needs of residents for convenient, cost effective, healthy mobility. My day job is at the Center for Latino Progress working on sustainable and equitable transportation with both our Transport Hartford Academy and BiCi Co. programs. The BiCi Co. program includes a bike shop social enterprise. In parallel to [bike-based programs](#) serving youth and adults in our community, we service bicycles and sell upcycled used bikes. Starting in 2021 we added new bike sales, and potentially future e-bike sales.

- Add CHEAPR members – (1) Connecticut bike shop or bike manufacturing/design representative, (2) active transportation walk/bike advocacy organization representative that includes an environmental justice community, and (3) the PURA Commissioner. These additional board members will add expertise necessary to shape the e-bike voucher aspect for CHEAPR, with direct knowledge of that industry and resident needs for bicycle-based car replacing transportation. The PURA Commissioner has an interest in CHEAPR proceedings from the perspective of the state's electrical grid, electricity production/regulation, and charging infrastructure required for an increasingly electrified transportation sector.
- Set the e-bike MSRP cap no lower than \$3,000 to make sure it includes bike shop quality commuting e-bikes (rear racks, fenders, chain guard, commuter bags/panniers) and entry level car replacement / family transport cargo bikes. If not included from the manufacturer, the e-bike voucher should include basic car-replacement e-bike accessories such as a water bottle holder, a bike rack or basket, bicycle lights, and bicycle bags (also called panniers) for carrying items while cycling. We wouldn't require an EV car to be sold without a cup holder, headlights, or a trunk. For reference, the [lowest cost e-bike that BiCi Co. can get right now has an MSRP of \\$1,999](#) – and that is without a water bottle holder or commuter bags. Most quality e-bikes at bike shops are still in that \$2,000 to \$3,000+ range, especially with supply shortages and price increases from manufacturers.

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- Recommend a \$1,000 e-bike voucher for low-income residents in a household with less than or equal to 100% of federal poverty level for their household, with a baseline e-bike voucher of \$500 for those for up to 300% of the federal poverty level. For reference, for a family of four, 100% of federal poverty level is \$26,500. That is the reality in communities that most need financially accessible, no emission EV mobility and increased jobs access. Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, and Bridgeport have many neighborhoods where median household income is less than \$30K / year – including my South Green neighborhood in Hartford.
- Recommend a language update to include “rebate or voucher” for Rebate+ low- to moderate-income (LMI) EV car incentives. Right now, the CT CHEAPR LMI Rebate+ is a post-sale form that must be approved with the rebate coming later as a reimbursement, separate from the baseline rebate. Putting low-income rebates at the point of sale is important for LMI participation. Low-income households can’t wait for \$2,000+ to come later as a reimbursement on a tight month to month budget.
- Rather than just offset investments for emissions generating regionally significant projects, include a 5% vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction target in SB-4 aligned with the state’s 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction mandate and the [Dec 2021 Executive Order](#) for CT DOT to set a 2030 VMT reduction target. We won’t reach the state’s 2030 emissions reduction goal of 45% by 2030 without reducing vehicle miles traveled while increasing transit ridership, active transportation mode share, and telecommuting.

- Please consider removing the new “advisory” language for CT CHEAPR. Based on my past board experiences it is always difficult to recruit/retain board members and reach a quorum. If the unpaid CHEAPR board is shifted to advisory only, they may lose experienced voices that will no longer find the role impactful. The current board has yet to sustain a vote against CT DEEP recommendations and priorities. Being able to submit motions, have meaningful discussions, and then vote as a board is an important tool to make sure the \$8 million / year in CHEAPR EV funds are used to the most benefit of Connecticut residents in pursuit of reduced emissions and increased equity. Consider the record of the prior three years of CHEAPR as a guide. Members of the CT CHEAPR Board have made many of the recommendations now captured in SB-4. If the board were moved to advisory only to CT DEEP, there would be less opportunity for board informed tweaks until it next came up in legislation. That is not nimble enough for an evolving program to respond to the shifting world of transportation, EV vehicle markets, and the climate emergency. Due to those shifting markets, supply issues, and economic flux it would be prudent for CT DEEP and the board to be able to modify (course correct) every six months rather than annually – understanding that the reasons for a mid-year program change must be significant enough to get board approval.

Thank you for the opportunity to support and comment on this important bill. The bill demonstrates a holistic understanding that our transportation systems are interconnected, and that electrification, transit, and active transportation (e-bikes) should be considered together as we move together to tackle the biggest challenge of our generation – immediate and impactful climate action.

I look forward to watching this bill as it advances. Godspeed.

Anthony Cherolis

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